



















# THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

By FRANCIS THOMPSON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
VALENTI ANGELO

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THE  
HOUND  
OF  
HEAVEN







## THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

I FLED Him, down the nights and down  
the days;

I fled Him, down the arches of the years;  
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears

T H E   H O U N D   O F   H E A V E N

I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

Up vistaed hopes I sped;

And shot, precipitated,

Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,

From those strong Feet that followed,  
followed after.

But with unhurrying chase,

And unperturbèd pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

They beat — and a Voice beat

More instant than the Feet —

“All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.”

B Y F R A N C I S T H O M P S O N

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,  
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,  
Trellised with intertwining charities;  
(For, though I knew His love Who followèd,  
Yet was I sore adread  
Lest, having Him, I must have naught  
beside)  
But, if one little casement parted wide,  
The gust of His approach would clash it to:  
Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to  
pursue.  
Across the margent of the world I fled,  
And troubled the gold gateways of the  
stars,  
Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;

T H E   H O U N D   O F   H E A V E N

Fretted to dulcet jars  
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the  
moon.

I said to Dawn: Be sudden — to Eve: Be soon;  
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me  
over

From this tremendous Lover —  
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!  
I tempted all His servitors, but to find  
My own betrayal in their constancy,  
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,  
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal  
deceit.

To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;  
Clung to the whistling mane of every  
wind.





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But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,  
The long savannahs of the blue;

Or whether, Thunder-driven,  
They clanged his chariot 'thwart a  
heaven,

Plashy with flying lightnings round the  
spurn o' their feet: —

Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to  
pursue.

Still with unhurrying chase,  
And unperturbèd pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
Came on the following Feet,  
And a Voice above their beat —

“Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter  
Me.”

BY FRANCIS THOMPSON

I sought no more that after which I strayed  
In face of man or maid;  
But still within the little children's eyes  
Seems something, something that  
replies,  
*They* at least are for me, surely for me!  
I turned me to them very wistfully;  
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair  
With dawning answers there,  
Their angel plucked them from me by the  
hair.  
“Come then, ye other children, Nature's —  
share  
With me” (said I) “your delicate fellowship;  
Let me greet you lip to lip,

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

Let me twine with you caresses,  
Wantoning  
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant  
tresses,  
Banqueting  
With her in her wind-walled palace,  
Underneath her azured daïs,  
Quaffing, as your taintless way is,  
From a chalice  
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.”  
So it was done:  
*I* in their delicate fellowship was one —  
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.  
*I* knew all the swift importings  
On the wilful face of skies;  
*I* knew how the clouds arise



## THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;  
All that's born or dies  
Rose and drooped with; made them  
shapers  
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine;  
With them joyed and was bereaven.  
I was heavy with the even,  
When she lit her glimmering tapers  
Round the day's dead sanctities.  
I laughed in the morning's eyes.  
I triumphed and I saddened with all  
weather,  
Heaven and I wept together,  
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal  
mine;  
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart

BY FRANCIS THOMPSON

I laid my own to beat,  
And share commingling heat;  
But not by that, by that, was eased my  
human smart.

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

**I**n vain my tears were wet on Heaven's  
grey cheek.

For ah! we know not what each other says,  
These things and I; in sound *I* speak —  
*Their* sound is but their stir, they speak by  
silences.

Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my  
drouth;

Let her, if she would owe me,  
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show  
me

The breasts o' her tenderness:  
Never did any milk of hers once bless  
My thirsting mouth.  
Nigh and nigh draws the chase,





# THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

With unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;  
And past those noisèd Feet  
A Voice comes yet more fleet —  
“Lo! naught contents thee, who  
content’st not me.”

B Y      F R A N C I S      T H O M P S O N

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!  
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn  
from me,

And smitten me to my knee;  
I am defenceless utterly.

I slept, methinks, and woke,  
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in  
sleep.

In the rash lustihead of my young powers,  
I shook the pillaring hours  
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with  
smears,

I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years —  
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the  
heap.

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

My days have crackled and gone up in  
smoke,  
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a  
stream.

Yea, faileth now even dream  
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;  
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy  
twist

I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,  
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account  
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.

Ah! is Thy love indeed  
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,  
Suffering no flowers except its own to  
mount?

Ah! must —



T H E   H O U N D   O F   H E A V E N

Designer infinite! —

Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst  
limn with it?

My freshness spent its wavering shower i'  
the dust;

And now my heart is as a broken fount,  
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down  
ever

From the dank thoughts that shiver  
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.

Such is; what is to be?

The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?  
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;  
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds  
From the hid battlements of Eternity;  
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then

B Y      F R A N C I S      T H O M P S O N

Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly  
wash again.

But not ere him who summoneth  
I first have seen, enwound  
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-  
crowned;  
His name I know, and what his trumpet  
saith.

Whether man's heart or life it be which  
yields  
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields  
Be dunged with rotten death?

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Now of that long pursuit  
Comes on at hand the bruit;  
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:  
“And is thy earth so marred,  
Shattered in shard on shard?  
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!

“Strange, piteous, futile thing!  
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?  
Seeing none but I makes much of naught”  
(He said),  
“And human love needs human meriting:  
How hast thou merited —  
Of all man’s clotted clay the dingiest clot?





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Alack, thou knowest not  
How little worthy of any love thou art!  
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
Save Me, save only Me?  
All which I took from thee I did but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might'st seek it in My  
arms,  
All which thy child's mistake  
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at  
home:  
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"

Halts by me that footfall:  
Is my gloom, after all,  
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?

B Y      F R A N C I S      T H O M P S O N

“Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,

I am He Whom thou seekest!

Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest  
Me.”



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